Section 5 # Correcting MAT Errors and TRACS Discrepancies

Monthly Activity Transmission (MAT) Error Detection and Correction

As described in Section 3, the MAT contains all of the form HUD-50059 data and *selected* data from the voucher (form HUD-52670 A, Part 1) including move-outs and terminations. (Refer to the *MAT User's Guide* at the back of this document for a more technical explanation of MAT error resolution.)

MAT processing checks the data for fundamental errors like the following:
- ▶ Are all field entries in the correct format?
- ▶ Do all mandatory MAT fields contain data?
- ▶ Is the transmission complete?
- ▶ Are the records in correct sequence?

When such errors are found, they must be corrected before the data can be resubmitted to TRACS. Format errors—such as incorrect field format and missing mandatory data—affect the specific record or field in error. The other errors affect the entire transmission. Depending on the type of errors found, all or part of the transmission is rejected and an error report is made available to the industry for correction and resubmission of data. This report is returned to the sender via the same medium in which TRACS received it: electronic mail (SprintMail).

Electronic Acknowledgement

Electronic acknowledgements are generated *upon request*. Electronic acknowledgement indicates that the data was picked up, but not necessarily processed by TRACS. (Refer to section 4, and the subsection Submitting Data Electronically, for an explanation of SprintMail, TRACS Mailbox Access, and Telemail; refer to the *PC SprintMail Information Packet* for technical information about electronic acknowledgment.)

Understanding the Contents of a MAT Error File

The MAT error file uses a flat file format, which basically means that it has no delimiters separating the fields. Without reformatting, this file is very difficult to read and interpret. Most TRACS submission software vendors reformat the file so that the errors are easier to interpret.

Whatever the exact visual layout or organization of the file returned to the owner/agent/contract administrator, the MAT error file always contains the following information:

▶ A list of all MAT error records (MATER) generated during MAT processing along with a description of each error

▶ A MAT Error Trailer Record (MATTR) ends the transmission; it provides a summary of the types of errors found in the MAT transmission. If a MATTR record is returned without any MATER records, then you know the transmission passed the MAT edits and was forwarded to TRACS.

(Refer to the *MAT User's Guide* for more information about MATER and MATTR records.)

Records Received and Processed *Without* Errors

When the MAT program processes a submission and finds no errors, a MAT trailer (MATTR) record is returned electronically without any associated MAT error (MATER) records. The MATTR record indicates zero records in error; it is issued for every transmission when it has passed all MAT program edits without errors.

Records Received and Processed *With* Errors

After an electronic submission is processed by the MAT program, each MAT error generates a MATER record and then a MATTR record is generated to indicate the total number of records and fields in error. The MATTR record is then returned to the sender with a MATER record for each MAT error in that submission.

How Industry Should Resolve MAT Errors

Industry participants should call the TRACS Hotline with any questions concerning MAT errors. The facility uses the *MAT User's Guide* to identify the mandatory field and format errors. The TRACS Hotline is also authorized to respond to file transfer errors (for example, the information in a specific field was missing or of the wrong type).

Resubmission of MAT Data from Industry

TRACS Hotline personnel and Field Office staff cannot update information in the TRACS system. Industry must always resubmit their own data to correct errors, with the exception of contract numbers, project numbers, or household member SSN's. These errors must be reported to Field Office staff and then corrected in the database by the TRACS maintenance staff.

Understanding MAT Errors and Entire File Rejection

MAT processing identifies formatting errors in the transmitted data and generates error records. The error message is returned to the sender. Certain errors, such as a transmission which does not include a header record as the first record in the transmission or a transmission which has a sequential record number out of sequence, cause a rejection of the entire transmission. The entire transmission is not returned to the sender; instead, only one error record is returned to indicate that the entire transmission was rejected.

How MAT Program Edits Relate to MAT Errors

MAT program edits consist of the following categories of errors:

1. **Field errors**: Data failed numeric, alpha, alphanumeric, or date validation.
2. **Mandatory errors**: Data contained spaces, zeros, or incorrect values.
3. **Record count errors**: Record counts in the MAT transmission header or MAT10 header record did not equal the MAT-calculated counts, or the sequence numbering for the file is out of sequence.

A field error or mandatory error in a record type causes a rejection of that record only. Field errors in a section of a MAT10 record cause a rejection of the entire MAT10 record (i.e., one 50059). ***An error record for the rejected record is returned to the sender and the sender must resend the entire record for a <u>specific 50059 certification</u> again, not the entire file.*** The MAT system generates error records (MATER) for the above types of errors. All MATER records for a transmission are returned to the sender in a single MAT error file. Records that pass MAT edits are available for TRACS processing.

Deadlines for Correcting MAT Errors

It is recommended that industry participants attempt to correct all MAT and tenant errors prior to the end of the filing period which is listed in HUD Handbook 4350.3. If corrections are not received prior to the end of the filing period, the corrected transaction(s) must be incorporated into the next month's set of transactions.

TRACS Discrepancy Detection and Correction

Data that passes the initial MAT edits is passed on to TRACS for processing and TRACS checks for discrepancies before the data is stored in the TRACS database. During this processing, TRACS checks each certification against appropriate program eligibility rules as specified in the HUD 4350.3 Handbook and compares its calculations to the submitted calculations. Further edits verify that all required data is present in the system. When the processing is completed, a file is made available to the owner/agent. The TRACS discrepancy file exists to provide feedback and support to the industry in error resolution.

The TRACS Discrepancy File

The TRACS discrepancy file is created electronically. It provides the industry with information pertaining to certification records that have successfully passed the MAT processing checks but contain certification, program eligibility, and/or calculation discrepancies. The TRACS discrepancy file also reveals where required data is missing or invalid for a particular certification; the file also clearly indicates fatal TRACS errors, such as records rejected or records not processed.

Except for fatal TRACS errors—those which do not make it into the TRACS database—the errors reported back to the industry participants are also available to the field office personnel through TRACS screens. With both the industry and field offices equipped with summarized accounts of system-detected errors, inconsistencies in information can be quickly identified and corrected.

TRACS returns to the sender specific information describing the discrepancies found when the tenant information was processed. The following data is returned:

- ▶ Mailbox ID
- ▶ Sender Defined Data
- ▶ Project Name
- ▶ Project Number
- ▶ Contract Number
- ▶ Unit Number (on complete certifications only)
- ▶ SSN
- ▶ Name
- ▶ Tenant Number
- ▶ Effective Date
- ▶ Discrepancy Code
- ▶ Action Required
- ▶ Relevant Discrepancy Information

When Field Office and TRACS Hotline staff interact with industry participants to resolve errors and other problems, the TRACS on-line discrepancy screens are used to look up the tenant data and reported errors.

Using TRACS Code Tables

All TRACS discrepancy codes pertaining to household certifications are listed in Appendix E: TRACS Code Tables (Error Message Texts) of the *MAT User's Guide*.

The **Action Required Codes** indicate the correction submission procedures and designate those messages which provide information:

01 -   Owner/Agent must submit correction within 45 days; these errors generally affect the assistance payment calculation

02 -   Owner/Agent must submit correction on the next submission and/or certification

03 -   Informational message; may or may not require correction